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ABSTRACT

In an effort to inform the program and services review, develop new instructional programs, and assist marketing efforts at Pima Community College (PCC), in Arizona, a survey was conducted in fall 1992 of Pima County employers' training needs, employment needs, and opinions about PCC. Questionnaires were mailed to a random sample of 759 local businesses, with completed surveys being received from 329. Study findings included the following: (1) the most commonly used PCC resources were regular credit courses for professional development and promotional items announcing PCC programs, and employers familiar with PCC services generally rated them as "very good"; (2) the most common sources used by employers to hire personnel were referrals from current employees and newspapers, while PCC's job bank was one of the least used resources; (3) all of the employers thought that the quality of employees' work, positive attitudes, ability to follow directions, teamwork, and good oral communication were very important; (4) the most common training needs expressed were specific skills, courses, or programs (21%) and computer skills training (13%); (5) 26% of the respondents used in-house training to meet needs and 23% used on-the-job training, while only 7% used PCC; and (6) while employer comments were generally favorable regarding the extent to which PCC was meeting their training needs, needs for improvement were cited with respect to providing more hands-on experience and better communication skills for graduates. The survey instrument is included. (KP)

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ED 368 408

1992 Employer Needs Assessment Results for Pima County Employers

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Pima Community College

Institutional Research Office

June 1993

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Pima Community College

1992 Employer Needs Assessment Results for Pima County Employers

Executive Summary

A survey of Pima County employers was conducted in Fall 1992 to assess their training needs, employment needs, and opinions about Pima Community College (PCC). The survey was designed to meet several needs at PCC simultaneously, including providing information for (1) Program and Services Review, (2) the development of new instructional programs within the College, and (3) marketing purposes. Results from the 329 respondents showed that:

1. PCC is doing a very good job of meeting the business community's needs.

2. While the respondents' familiarity with resources and services offered employers was variable, employers who were familiar with the services rated most of them as very good. However, it is recommended that the College increase its efforts to familiarize employers with the lesser known resources, such as occupational advisory committees, customized employee training, the Small Business Development and Training Center, and the PCC Job Bank.

3. Knowledge and skill areas most valued by employers included: (1) quality of employees' work, (2) having a positive attitude toward work, (3) following directions, (4) working as a member of a team, (5) oral communication, (6) completing tasks in a timely manner, (7) punctuality, and (8) applying knowledge/skills. The College may want to consider incorporating into the curriculum some of the above referenced areas that are not currently being addressed.

4. Because PCC is currently meeting less than 10% of the typical employer's total training needs, there may be additional opportunities for the College to offer training programs to meet these needs.

5. The respondents believe that PCC can better meet their needs by providing graduates with more hands-on experiences, such as co-op classes and internships. Employers also indicated that graduates are in need of better communication skills and good work ethics.

Overall, PCC seems to be serving Pima County employers well through being sensitive to community needs, offering a variety of courses, and producing well trained graduates. At the same time, the College appears to have opportunities to tailor future training programs and curricula to be even more responsive to employers.

Pima Community College

1992 Employer Needs Assessment Results for Pima County Employers[1]

A survey of Pima County employers was conducted in Fall 1992 to assess their training needs, employment needs, and opinions about Pima Community College (PCC). The survey was designed to meet several needs at PCC simultaneously, including providing information for (1) Program and Services Review, (2) the development of new instructional programs within the College, and (3) marketing purposes. The current report focuses on the survey results related to all Pima County employers.

Method

The Employer Needs Assessment questionnaire (Appendix) was mailed to a stratified random sample of 759 Pima County employers. The second page of the questionnaire was customized to reflect the type of positions that each respondent might employ.

Those employers not responding to the survey were contacted by telephone to encourage them to complete the survey. Alternatively, they were given the opportunity to respond to the survey over the phone, if they desired. Descriptive statistics were calculated for quantitative data, while narrative comments were categorized.

Results

Completed surveys were received from 329 (43%) of the total surveyed employers. However, the reader should be cautioned that these results may not be representative of those employers not responding to the survey. Some of those not responding indicated that they did not feel that their input would be useful because they operated very small businesses and did not anticipate using PCC's services.

The survey respondents primarily represented small to medium sized employers, ranging in size from 1 to 1000 total employees. The typical (median) respondent reported having 6 full-time employees, 3 part-time employees, and 9 total employees.

A breakdown of total respondents by Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) is depicted in Graph 1. It shows that the largest proportion of employers were classified in the services industry (56%). The remainder of the respondents were classified as wholesale/retail trade (13%), finance, insurance, and real estate (10%), construction (8%), manufacturing (7%), and other (6%).

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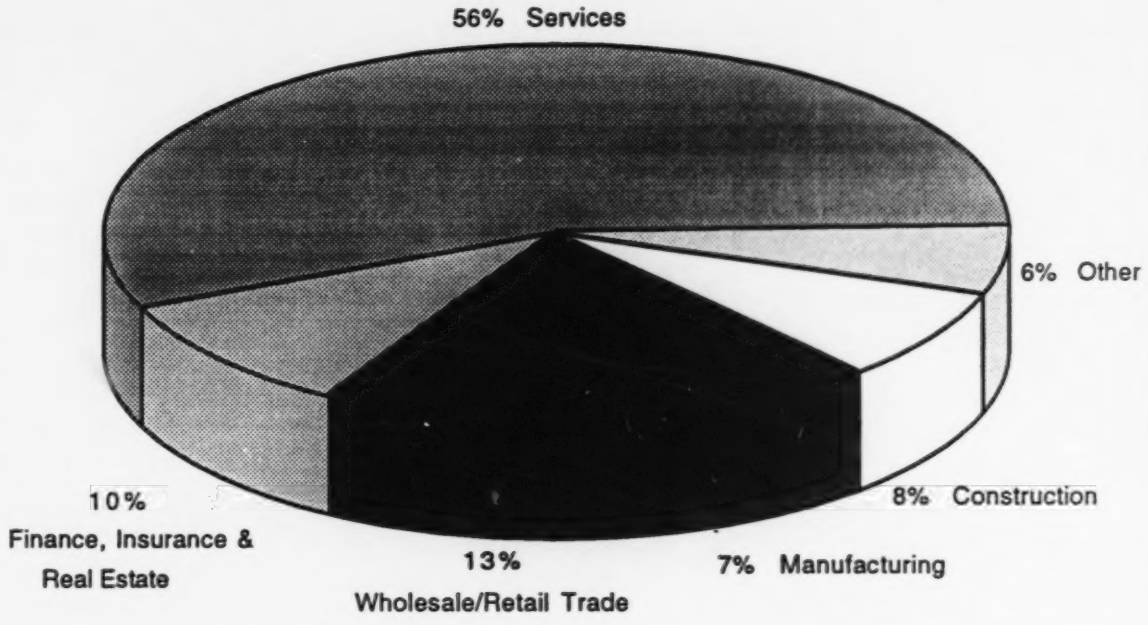
[1] This project was jointly funded by the PCC Institutional Research, Occupational Education, and Marketing Departments and the Gerontology Think Tank.

Graph 1. Percent of 1992 Pima County Employer Needs Assessment Respondents By Standard Industrial Classification



Employers were asked about their familiarity and satisfaction with several resources that PCC makes available to employers. Their responses are summarized in Table 1. It shows that respondents most often used regular credit courses for professional development or skill upgrade (27%) and announcements about PCC's programs and services, such as brochures and catalogs (27%). Conversely, respondents were least knowledgeable about occupational advisory committees (75%), customized employee training (71%), and the Small Business Development Center (67%). On average, employers familiar with the listed PCC resources rated them as very good, except customized employee training and the Job Bank, which they rated as good.

Table 1. Familiarity and Satisfaction with PCC Employer Services by Pima County Employers

Resource	Level of Familiarity			Average Satisfaction Rating
	Don't Know Resource	Know Resource Haven't used	Used Resource	
Customized employee training	71%	20%	9%	Good
Regular credit courses for professional development or skill upgrade	27%	46%	27%	Very Good
PCC's Small Business Development Center	67%	28%	5%	Very Good
Placement of Co-op students or interns	45%	39%	16%	Very Good
Occupational Advisory Committees	75%	20%	5%	Very Good
PCC's Libraries	32%	51%	17%	Very Good
PCC's Job Bank	44%	38%	18%	Good
Announcements about PCC's programs and services (e.g., brochures, catalogs)	29%	44%	27%	Very Good

Table 2 displays the sources used by Pima County employers to hire their employees. It shows that the majority of respondents hired employees through either referrals from current employees or others (25%) or newspaper advertisements (23%). Sources least often used included job fairs (2%), the PCC Job Bank (5%), and employment services at other educational institutions (6%).

Table 2. Sources Used by Pima County Employers to Hire Employees

Source	Number	Percent
Referrals by employees or others	208	25%
Newspaper advertisement	191	23%
Self referrals (Walk-ins)	121	15%
Other employment agencies	59	7%
Interns/Co-op students	57	7%
Recruitment	54	7%
Other educational institution employment services	51	6%
Pima Community College Job Bank	45	5%
Job Fair	20	2%
Other	24	3%
Total	830	100%

Employers were next asked to rate the importance of various knowledge and skill areas for their new employees. The results of their ratings are summarized in Table 3 and in Graphs 2-1 to 2-3. Table 3 lists the percentage of respondents who rated a specific knowledge or skill area as important (i.e., slightly important, important or very important), as well as the average rating.

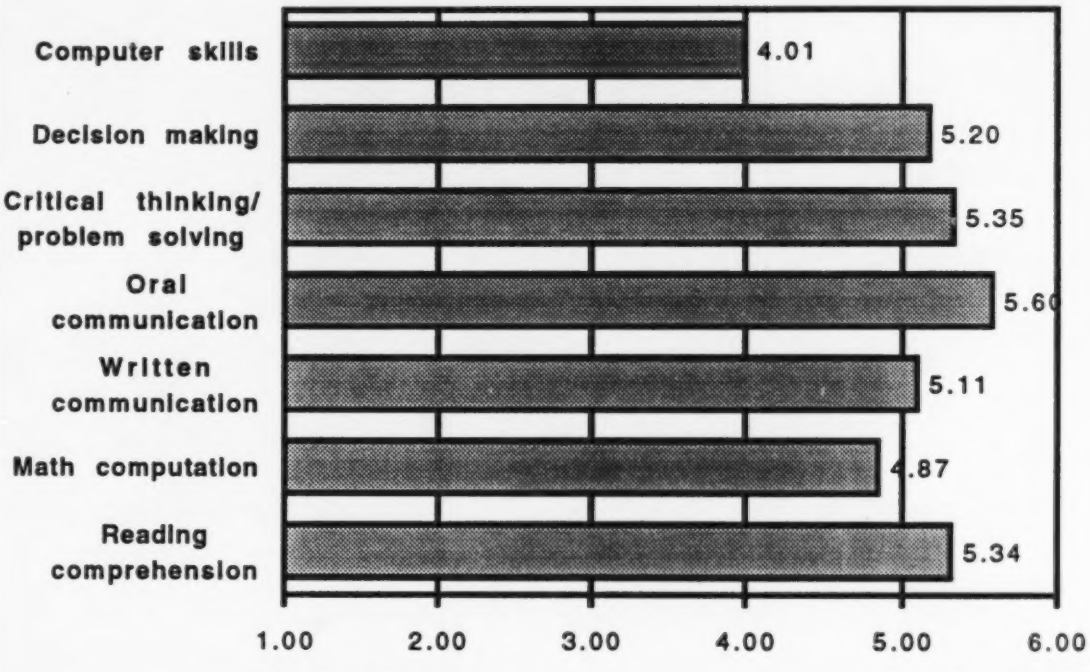
Table 3. Importance of General Education and Work-Related Knowledge and Skills to Pima County Employers

Knowledge/Skill Area	% Rating Important*	Average Rating
General Education Knowledge/Abilities		
Reading comprehension	97%	Important
Mathematical computation	93%	Important
Written communication	94%	Important
Oral communication	99%	Very Important
Critical thinking/problem solving	97%	Important
Decision making	97%	Important
Computer skills, such as word processing	69%	Slightly Important
Work Knowledge/Skills/Attitudes (Applied General Education)		
Interpersonal/people skills	98%	Important
Ability to work independently	99%	Important
Applying knowledge/skills related to job	98%	Very Important
Punctuality	99%	Very Important
Completing tasks in a timely manner	100%	Very Important
Quality of work	100%	Very Important
Following directions	100%	Very Important
Working as a member of a team	100%	Very Important
Using written bilingual skills	43%	Slightly Unimportant
Using verbal bilingual skills	54%	Slightly Unimportant
Ability to learn new skills	97%	Important
Having a positive attitude toward work	100%	Very Important
Other		
Work-related experience related to position	90%	Important
Possessing a technical certificate from an accredited institution in a field related to job	61%	Slightly Important
Possessing a two-year, associate degree from an accredited institution in a field related to job	54%	Slightly Unimportant
Possessing a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution in a field related to job	49%	Slightly Unimportant

*Includes slightly important, important, and very important

As shown in Table 3 and Graph 2-1, oral communication was rated as very important by Pima County employers. All other general education knowledge/ability areas were rated as important, on average, except word processing computer skills, which were assessed as only slightly important.

Graph 2-1. Average Importance of General Education Knowledge/Abilities to Pima County Employers



Work knowledge, skills, and attitudes rated as very important included: (1) quality of employees' work, (2) having a positive attitude toward work, (3) following directions, (4) working as a member of a team, (5) completing tasks in a timely manner, (6) punctuality, and (7) applying knowledge/skills (Table 3 and Graph 2-2). Respondents assessed the other areas in this section as being important, except using written or verbal bilingual skills, which were assessed as only slightly important.

Graph 2-2. Average Importance of Work Knowledge/Skills/Attitudes (Applied General Education) to Pima County Employers

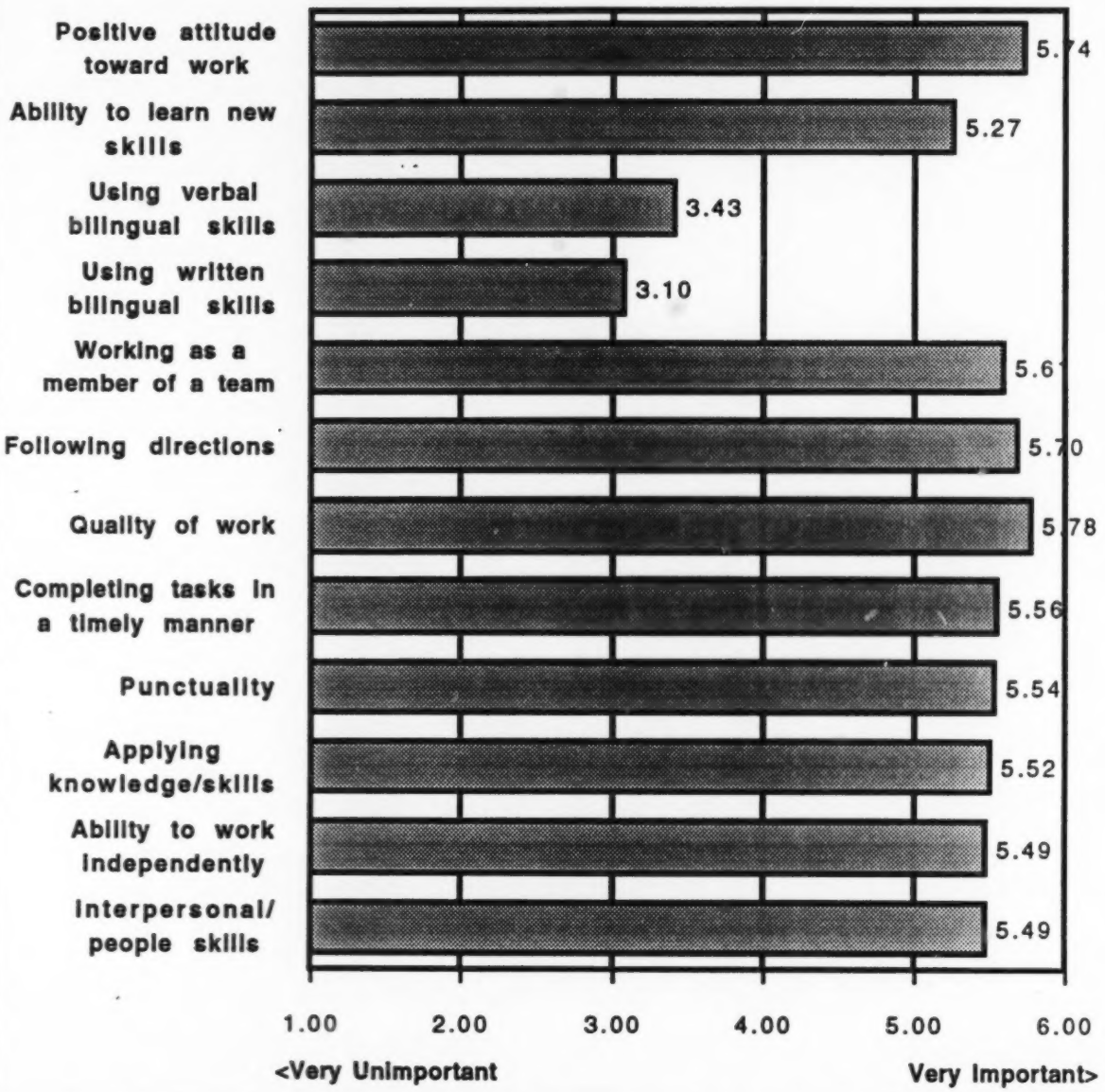
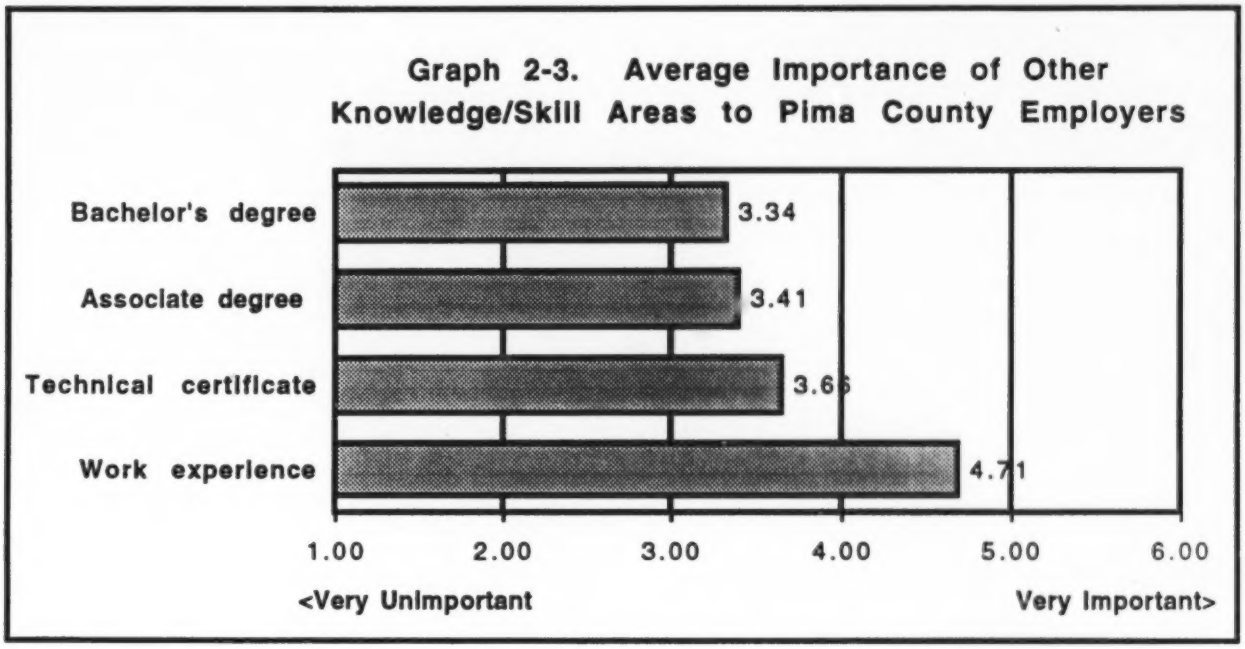


Table 3 and Graph 2-3 indicate that work experience related to an employee's position is important to Pima County employers, while possessing a technical certificate is only slightly important. However, the respondents assessed possessing an associate degree or bachelor's degree as slightly unimportant.



Tables 4 through 10 categorize responses to open ended questions. For each table, the "other" category includes miscellaneous comments having few responses. In Table 4, the most frequently noted current training needs for Pima County employees were for specific skills, courses, and programs. Presently, these training needs are most often being met through in-house training, on-the-job training, and externally conducted workshops or seminars, as Table 5 shows. Training needs for the next five years include specific skills, courses, and programs, including computer skills, and refresher courses (Table 6).

Table 4. Current Training Needs for Pima County Employees

Comment	N	%
Specific skills/courses/programs	63	21%
Computer skills	41	13%
Ongoing inservice training; refresher courses	34	11%
Training for degrees, licensure and certification	25	8%
Management/supervisory skills	23	8%
General office skills	22	7%
Marketing/Sales skills	14	5%
Human Relations skills	13	4%
On-the-job training	11	4%
Communication skills	10	3%
Problem solving	8	3%
Other	39	13%
Total	**303**	**100%**

Table 5. How Current Training Needs are being Met for Pima County Employees

Comment	N	%
In-house training	51	26%
On-the-job training	46	23%
External training; workshops, seminars	39	20%
Local colleges/university	18	9%
Pima Community College	13	7%
Previous experience	11	5%
Specific skills/courses/programs	7	4%
Ongoing inservice training; refresher courses	4	2%
Other	8	4%
Total	**197**	**100%**

Table 6. Anticipated Education/Training Needs over Next Five Years for Pima County Employees

Comment	N	%
Specific skills/courses/programs	57	26%
Computer skills	32	15%
Ongoing inservice training; refresher courses	30	14%
Training for degees, licensure and certification	17	8%
Management/supervisory skills	16	7%
Communication skills	16	7%
In-House training	9	4%
Human Relations skills	9	4%
Finance	8	4%
Safaty	8	4%
Business office skills	7	3%
Other	8	4%
Total	**217**	**100%**

When asked what courses or services PCC could offer to fulfill their training needs, the respondents most often mentioned specific skills, courses, and programs, including computer skills (Table 7).

Table 7. Courses or Services that PCC Could Offer to Fulfill Pima County Employee Training Needs

Comment	N	%
Specific skills/courses/programs	61	32%
Computer skills; software	29	15%
Bilingual skills	12	6%
Management/supervisory skills	11	5%
Accounting/Bookkeeping	11	5%
Training for degrees, licensure and certification	10	5%
Ongoing inservice training; refresher courses	10	5%
Business office skills	9	5%
Marketing/Sales skills	9	5%
Hands-on experience; Co-op classes	9	5%
Human Relations skills	9	5%
Other	13	7%
Total	**193**	**100%**

Table 8 lists suggestions how PCC can better prepare graduates to meet the needs of Pima County employers. Ideas most often mentioned by respondents included: (1) providing more hands-on experiences, (2) offering specific skills, courses, and programs, (3) enhancing communication skills, and (4) encouraging good work ethics.

Table 8. How PCC can Better Prepare Graduates to Meet Pima County Employer Needs

Comment	N	%
Hands-on experience - co-op classes	28	22%
Specific skills/courses/programs	19	15%
Communication skills	18	14%
Good work ethics	16	12%
Work closely with employers	8	6%
Problem solving skills	7	5%
Math skills	6	5%
Human Relations skills	5	4%
Computer skills	4	3%
Basic office skills	4	3%
More updated technical training	4	3%
Other	11	8%
Total	**130**	**100%**

On average, Pima County employers rated the College's efforts to meet the business community's needs very good. The reasons for the respondents' ratings are summarized in Table 9. They most often mentioned that PCC: (1) tries hard to meet community needs, (2) offers a wide variety of both credit and non-credit courses, and (3) produces graduates that are generally well trained and ready for work.

Table 9. Reasons for Pima County Employers' Ratings of How Well PCC is meeting the Business Community's Needs

Comment	N	%
Positive Comments:		
Tries hard to meet community needs	23	23%
Variety of courses (credit/non-credit)	11	10%
Graduates seem well trained and ready to work; good reputation	9	9%
Programs developed for specific industries	6	6%
School has good reputation	6	6%
Program knowledge	5	5%
Class times/locations	4	4%
This survey	3	3%
Cost	3	3%
Other	10	10%
Sub-Total	**80**	**79%**
Negative Comments:		
Need more community awareness	3	3%
Lack good communication skills	3	3%
Specific skills/courses/programs	3	3%
Need basic skills, not high technology	2	2%
College not always "real life"	2	2%
Haven't met too many graduates from PCC with a lot on the ball; not willing to work	2	2%
Need hands on training; co-op	2	2%
Other	4	4%
Sub-Total	**21**	**21%**
Total	**101**	**100%**

Additional miscellaneous comments are shown in Table 10.

Table 10. Other Comments

Comment	N	%
Small company-most of this doesn't pertain, only hire experienced people, family run, 1 man office, wouldn't be applying to PCC for employees, union hall hiring, Masters level only, volunteers only, specialty company	63	53%
Need to improve specific skills/courses/programs	13	11%
PCC needs to work with employer regarding job requirements	9	8%
Need to inform Community about services/courses	6	5%
Teachers: upgrade quality, teach what course indicates, need more personal approach	5	4%
No knowledge/involvement with PCC	4	3%
Need employees with good ethics/qualifications	4	3%
PCC needs more locations/better class times	4	3%
Other	11	10%
Total	**119**	**100%**

Conclusions and Recommendations

The following conclusions and recommendations are offered based upon the results of the Employer Needs Assessment for Pima County employers:

1. Survey results show that PCC is doing a very good job of meeting the business community's needs.

2. The proportion of respondents familiar with resources and services offered employers ranged from 25% for occupational advisory committees to 73% for regular credit courses that support professional development or skill upgrade. Employers who were familiar with the services rated most of them as very good. However, there were a number of resources that were unfamiliar to them. It is recommended that the College increase its efforts to familiarize employers with occupational advisory committees, customized employee training, the Small Business Development and Training Center, and the PCC Job Bank.

3. Employers indicated that they valued work related knowledge, skills and attitudes (applied general education) more than basic general education knowledge and abilities. Those knowledge and skill areas rated as being very important included: (1) quality of employees' work, (2) having a positive attitude toward work, (3) following directions, (4) working as a member of a team, (5) oral communication, (6) completing tasks in a timely manner, (7) punctuality, and (8) applying knowledge/skills. Additionally, having work experience related to

an employee's job was rated as being more important than having a certificate or degree. Because of the importance placed upon work related skills and attitudes, the College may want to consider incorporating into the curriculum some of the above referenced areas that are not currently being addressed. PCC might also consider promoting the benefits of an associates degree, such as having well rounded employees possessing general education competencies, with employers.

4. Survey results show that PCC is currently meeting less than 10% of the typical employer's total training needs. Thus, there appear to be additional opportunities for the College to offer training programs to meet these needs. While the employers' specific training needs are diverse, computer skills training was most often cited.

5. The respondents believe that PCC can better meet their needs by providing graduates with more hands-on experiences, such as co-op classes and internships. Employers also indicated that graduates are in need of better communication skills and good work ethics.

6. Overall, PCC seems to be serving Pima County employers well through being sensitive to community needs, offering a variety of courses, and producing well trained graduates. At the same time, the College appears to have opportunities to tailor future training programs and curricula to be even more responsive to employers.

Appendix

Pima Community College
1992 Employer Needs Assessment

Please take a few minutes to respond to the following questions. Your responses will help Pima Community College (PCC) improve its instructional programs. Please help us keep our records up-to-date by correcting any errors in the information listed below. Return your completed questionnaire in the enclosed envelope to the Institutional Research Office, Pima Community College, 200 N. Stone Ave., Tucson, AZ 85702 by **Tuesday, September 22nd.**

Person Completing Survey: _____

Position: _____

Employer: _____ Phone: _____

Employer Address: _____

A. Pima Community College provides a variety of resources to Pima County employers. Using the **experience** scale, indicate your level of familiarity with each of the listed resources. If you are familiar with a particular resource, please rate your **satisfaction** with it.

	Experience			**Satisfaction**					
	Do not know of resource	*Know of resource, but have not used it*	*Have used resource*	*Excellent*	*Very Good*	*Good*	*Fair*	*Poor*	*Don't Know/ No Opinon*
1. Customized employee training									
2. Regular credit courses for professional development or skill upgrade									
3. PCC's Small Business Development Center									
4. Placement of Co-op students or interns									
5. Occupational Advisory Committees									
6. PCC's Libraries									
7. PCC's Job Bank									
8. Announcements about PCC's programs and services (e.g., brochures, catalogs)									
9. Other (specify)									

B. What sources do you use to hire your employees? (Check all that apply)

___ Pima Community College Job Bank
___ Other educational institution employment services
___ Other employment agencies
___ Newspaper advertisement
___ Job Fair, conducted by (specify)_____
___ Referrals by employees or others
___ Self referrals (walk-ins)
___ Interns/Co-op students
___ Recruitment
___ Other (specify)_____

C. How many people do you currently employ? Full-time _____ Part-time _____

D. For each of the positions specified below, please list the number of full-time and part-time positions (current employees plus unfilled openings) that you **currently** have. Then, estimate the number of hirings you expect in these positions both next year and in the following four years. Finally, please indicate the average 1992 full-time entry-level pay for each of the positions. Space is provided at the bottom of the chart for you to add other **related** positions not listed.

Position	Number of Positions						Average 1992 Full-time Entry-Level Pay
	Current Employees Plus Openings		Estimated Future Openings				
	1992		1993		1994-97		
	F/T	P/T	F/T	P/T	F/T	P/T	
							$ per
							$ per
							$ per
							$ per
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E. What do you look for when you hire most new employees? Please rate the **importance** of each of the knowledge and skill areas listed below, by circling the appropriate response:

	Very Important	Important	Slightly Important	Slightly Unimportant	Unimportant	Very Unimportant	Don't Know/No Opinion
General Education Knowledge/Abilities							
1. Reading comprehension	VI	I	SI	SU	U	VU	DK
2. Mathematical computation	VI	I	SI	SU	U	VU	DK
3. Written communication	VI	I	SI	SU	U	VU	DK
4. Oral communication	VI	I	SI	SU	U	VU	DK
5. Critical thinking/problem solving	VI	I	SI	SU	U	VU	DK
6. Decision making	VI	I	SI	SU	U	VU	DK
7. Computer skills, such as wordprocessing	VI	I	SI	SU	U	VU	DK
8. Other (specify):	VI	I	SI	SU	U	VU	DK
Work Knowledge/Skills/Attitudes							
9. Interpersonal/people skills	VI	I	SI	SU	U	VU	DK
10. Ability to work independently	VI	I	SI	SU	U	VU	DK
11. Applying knowledge/skills related to job	VI	I	SI	SU	U	VU	DK
12. Punctuality	VI	I	SI	SU	U	VU	DK
13. Completing tasks in a timely manner	VI	I	SI	SU	U	VU	DK
14. Quality of work	VI	I	SI	SU	U	VU	DK
15. Following directions	VI	I	SI	SU	U	VU	DK
16. Working as a member of a team	VI	I	SI	SU	U	VU	DK
17. Using written bilingual skills	VI	I	SI	SU	U	VU	DK
18. Using verbal bilingual skills	VI	I	SI	SU	U	VU	DK
19. Ability to learn new skills	VI	I	SI	SU	U	VU	DK
20. Having a positive attitude toward work	VI	I	SI	SU	U	VU	DK
21. Other (specify):	VI	I	SI	SU	U	VU	DK
Other							
22. Work experience related to position	VI	I	SI	SU	U	VU	DK
23. Possessing a technical certificate from an accredited institution in a field related to job	VI	I	SI	SU	U	VU	DK
24. Possessing a two-year, associate degree from an accredited institution in a field related to job	VI	I	SI	SU	U	VU	DK
25. Possessing a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution in a field related to job	VI	I	SI	SU	U	VU	DK
26. Other (specify):	VI	I	SI	SU	U	VU	DK

F. What are the specific training needs of your current employees? How are these needs being met?

G. What are your anticipated major employee education/training needs for the next five years?

H. What instructional programs, courses or services could PCC offer to fulfill your current and future employee education/training needs?

I. How can Pima Community College better prepare its graduates to meet your employment needs?

J. How would you rate the College's efforts to meet the business community's needs? (Check one)

___ Excellent ___ Very Good ___ Good ___ Fair ___ Poor ___ Don't Know/No Opinion

Explain why: _____

K. Other comments or suggestions as to how PCC can improve its services, facilities or instruction?

☐ Please check this box if you would like PCC to contact you with more information about its programs and services.

☐ Please check this box if you would like a copy of the survey results.

Thank you.